

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

It is believed that this Amendment, in conjunction with the following remarks, place the application in immediate condition for allowance or at least presents the claims in better form for consideration on Appeal. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment and favorable consideration of the application are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-7, 9-54, and 56-59 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 13, 20, 29, 35, 40, and 48 are independent claims. Claims 8 and 55 are canceled by this Amendment. Also, claims 20, 29 and 40 have been rewritten into independent form.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication on page 16 of the Office Action that claims 8-12, 20-23, 29-30, 40-43 and 55-59 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By the present Amendment, independent claims 1, 13, and 48 have been amended or added to recite limitations similar to those indicated as allowable within claims 8 and 55. Separately, claims 20, 29 and 40 have been redrafted as independent claims. Accordingly, all claims should be allowable in view of the indication of allowable subject matter.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102 and 103

By the present Amendment, all claims have been amended to include subject matter indicated as allowable by the Examiner. As such, withdrawal of the art grounds of rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed in this paper. However, failure to address a specific rejection, issue, or comment, does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above are not intended to be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

In light of the amendments contained herein, Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance, for which early action is requested. Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Please charge any fees or overpayments that may be due with this response to Deposit Account No. 17-0026. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Dated 2/8/10

Respectfully submitted,

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